

John Bosco was born on 16th August 1815, the son of a poor farmer, in a little village in Italy called Becchi. From a very early age John wanted to become a priest. Although he faced many obstacles during his studies, he was finally ordained on 5th June 1841. He was called Don Bosco, which means father Bosco in Italian. After his ordination to the priesthood, he began working in the city of Turin. He was shocked when he saw how many children had no homes.

When he offered to help one young boy, six friends came with him. Gradually, numbers grew and more homeless children arrived. Don Bosco played football with them, cooked for them. He taught them skills such as carpentry and tailoring, and gave them hope for the future. Later he built orphanages and provided the boys with a home. He soon realised he could not do this by himself. In 1859 he founded a religious order, which is now known as the Salesians of Don Bosco.

Extract taken from *101 Saints and Special People*; Don Bosco Publications 2003.